

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 11939 210625Z

21

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6214

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11939

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY THREATENED SPLIT

SUMMARY: A RANKING SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY (SJP) MEMBER TOLD US JUNE 20 THAT THE PARTY CAN CONTAIN SUCHIN CHAOWISIT'S THREATENED SPLIT SO THAT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FALL. THE SJP, AS ONE OF THAILAND'S MOST LOOSELY ORGANIZED POLITICAL PARTIES WITH A BEVY OF AMBITIOUS, UNREQUITED PARLIAMENTARIANS, WAS A PREDICTABLE CONDIDATE FOR SUCH INTERNAL PROBLEMS. SPLINTERIST SUCHIN, HOWEVER, HAS A UNIFORMLY LESS THAN ADMIRABLE REPUTATION IN THAI POLITICS, A FACTOR WHICH CONSIDERABLY DECREASES HIS THREAT TO THE RULING COALITION. END SUMMARY.

1. PRAMUAN KUNLAMAT, SOCIAL JUSTICE PARLIAMENTARIAN FROM CHUMPHON PROVINCE AND DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE LOWER HOUSE, TOLD A POLITICAL OFFICER JUNE 20 THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE FACTIONALIST THREAT FROM SUCHIN CHAOWISIT (SJP-SISAKET) OR CHARUN WATTHANAKON (SJP-RATCHABURI) WOULD BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. HE THOUGHT THAT THE SJP WOULD BE ABLE TO SATISFY ALL OF THE 19 SJP DISSIDENTS, EXCEPT THE TWO LEADERS, AND AVOID AN ACTUAL SPLIT. HE ALSO THEORIZED  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 11939 210625Z

THAT THE OPPOSITION DEMOCRAT PARTY WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY

PRESS THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME.

2. ARTICLE 159 OF THE 1974 CONSTITUTION REQUIRES THAT ONE-FIFTH OF THE LOWER HOUSE MEMBERS MUST SIGN THE MOTION CALLING FOR A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. SUCHIN'S TWENTY-SIX REBELS AREN'T ENOUGH TO BRING DOWN THE HOUSE THEMSELVES AND THERE IS A SERIOUS QUESTION OF WHETHER THE OPPOSITION DEMOCRATS WOULD WOULD ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH THE DISRE-PUTABLE SUCHIN.

3. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT HAS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO CONTROL THE PARLIAMENT. IN ADDITION TO AN EXTENSIVE PATRONAGE SYSTEM, WHICH INVOLVES APPOINTING MP'S TO FUNCTIONLESS JOBS WITH GOOD PAY, KHUKRIT HAS LEFT THREE (3) DEPUTY MINISTERSHIPS VACANT TO SERVE AS INDUCEMENTS TO POLITICAL LOYALTY.

4. SJP IS, AS A DISGRUNTLED BACKBENCHER TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER JUNE 13, A PACK OF EGOTISTS ALL WANTING CABINET POSITIONS. THERE IS LITTLE UNITY OF PURPOSE, HE EXPLAINED. EVEN SJP MEMBERS ADMIT THAT THE PARTY WAS UNABLE TO UNITE BEHIND A LIST OF CABINET NOMINATIONS AND THEREFORE RECEIVED FEWER CABINET JOBS THAN ITS POSITION AS THE SECOND LARGEST PARTY IN THE PARLIAMENT WOULD WARRANT. THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY HAS AN 18 MEMBER PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION AND 5 CABINET POSITIONS; WHILE SJP HAS ONLY 8 HIGH POSITIONS FOR ITS 45 MEMBERS.

5. THE THAI AND ENGLISH PRESS UNIFORMLY REPORT SUCHIN'S MOVES IN AN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT, GENERALLY ACCUSING HIM OF SELFISHNESS (SEE FBIS BK 190751Y; 190249Y JUNE 1975). SUCHIN, WHO WON HIS SEAT IN 1968 BY PASSING OUT SALTED FISH TO THE VOTERS, HAS A GENERALLY UNATTRACTIVE REPUTATION THROUGHOUT THE THAI POLITICAL WORLD (SEE BANGKOK A-84 OF 29 MARCH 1969).

6. SUCHIN MAY HAVE SERIOUSLY COMPROMISED HIMSELF WITH THIS PUBLIC MOVE. HE WILL MAKE A PERFECT FOIL FOR KHUKRIT-- THE OPPORTUNIST GREEDY POLITICIAN AGAINST THE NATION'S CALM LEADER. THE ISSUE DOES NOT PRESENTLY APPEAR TO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 11939 210625Z

BE MUCH OF A THREAT TO THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE THE OTHER PARTIES IN THE COALITION HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN ITS CONTINUATION.  
WHITEHOUSE

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